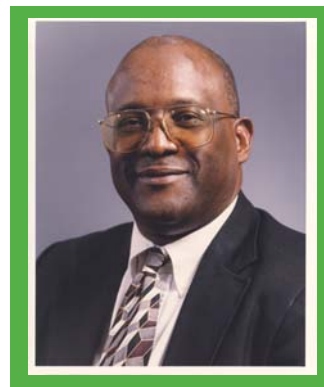


Minnesota NRCS

"Conservation is ethically sound. It is rooted in our love of the land, our respect for the rights of others, our devotion to the rule of law."

~Lyndon Baines Johnson



WILLIAM HUNT,
STATE CONSERVATIONIST

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Thanks to each and every one of you for making fiscal year 2006 another great year of "bumper crop" Conservation accomplishments in Minnesota. Your extra efforts, can-do positive attitudes and personal sacrifices of both you and your families are greatly appreciated. But we couldn't have done all this alone! None of these achievements would have been possible without the strong conservation ethic and support of our dedicated landowners, land users, SWCD supervisors and employees, BWSR Staff, RC&D Council members and employees, FSA, Earth Team Volunteers and other partners too numerous to enumerate. Do take time out to thank all these conservation professionals who do so much to help us make a difference on the MN conservation landscape.

NRCS recently announced the appointment of a new NRCS Chief, Arlen Lancaster. Arlen replaced Bruce Knight who served as Chief for over 4 years. During Chief Knight's tenure we came of age as an agency. Our conservation budgets grew to over \$3 billion. Technology, E-Gov, web sites and transparency of operations has become our standard way of doing business. We grew into the modern communications age very quickly under former Chief Knight and I'm confident we will grow even more under Chief Lancaster. My plans are to have our new chief visit Minnesota in the very near future to personally meet some of the best NRCS employees and partners in the nation!

William Hunt, State Conservationist

All Cultural Appreciation Month celebrations held in Minnesota

By Amy Stratton, CR Chairperson

In celebration of All Cultural Appreciation Month, the MN NRCS Civil Rights Committee and MN NRCS recently held events during the month of July. This event started because of the commitment William Hunt, State Conservationist has had to recognizing the importance of All cultures in Minnesota.

These events were open to all MN NRCS employees, Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Resource Conservation and Development Councils, volunteers, and project partners. These events provided hands-on learning opportunities as it related to cultures in the State of Minnesota. This is the second time that events such as these were planned in Minnesota. Last year marked the beginning of state wide All Cultural Appreciation events.

The following locations were used for All Cultural Appreciation Month sessions

Wilder Farm, Marine on the St. Croix Tuesday, July 11th

Farmamerica, Waseca Wednesday, July 12th

Kandiyohi County Historical Museum, Willmar

Thursday, July 13th

Kathio State Park, Mille Lacs Lake, Onamia Monday,
July 17th

White Earth Reservation, Mahnomon Tuesday, July 18th

All MN NRCS employees were encouraged to attend one of these events. Events such as this provide NRCS employees and partners an interesting way to learn about other people's cultures by visiting various places in Minnesota.

The All Cultural Resources Subcommittee included the following employees:

Shannon Bengtson, Chair
Cory Drummond
Christiane Roy
Amy Stratton

Training Subcommittee:

John Anderson, Chair
Martin Goettl
Mike Taylor
Steve Lutes
Amy Stratton

Numerous Civil Rights Committee members also assisted in providing presentations, gathering participant info, etc. A special thank you to each and everyone of the NRCS employees that assisted in making this event a success.

NRCS employees at the Wilder event had this to share about their experience at the All Cultural Appreciation Event!

"It was very informational. Until today, I didn't know this facility existed. The facility is such a great benefit to limited producers. Alvaro did a great presentation on how the facility worked".

-Winnie Chen



Beth Collins, GIS Specialist from Area 5 participated in the Willmar, Minnesota event at Kandiyohi County Historical Museum.

**Minnesota Tribal Conservation Advisory
Council
Tribal Outreach and Training Conference
By Julie A. MacSwain,
State Public Affairs Specialist**

August 8-9, 2006 marked the dates of a Minnesota Tribal Conservation Advisory Council meeting sponsored by Indian Nations Conservation Alliance (INCA).

The meeting was held at the Grand Casino Mille Lacs. Close to 100 people attended this important Minnesota conference.

William Hunt, State Conservationist said to the conference participants, "Help us to help you." The various exhibits that the conference co-sponsors are showcasing are good ways for you to obtain program information from USDA and other agencies. This conference enabled USDA agency personnel to learn more about past, present and future concerns and success stories of each of the Minnesota tribes in attendance. Mike Swan, a Representative from the White Earth tribe announced the signing of a mutual agreement for the formation of a Tribal Conservation District and presented the agreement to William Hunt for signature by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Hunt reminded the conference attendees that conferences such as this are a good way to learn about what various USDA agencies can offer to tribes in Minnesota.

Hunt said NRCS in Minnesota has 83 field offices in Minnesota and these offices are here to serve ALL the people of Minnesota.

For more information about Outreach efforts that are occurring in Minnesota by NRCS, please contact, **Debra Walchuk**, State Outreach Coordinator. Debra can be reached at (218)-751-1942, extension 131.



William Hunt, State Conservationist for MN NRCS served as one of the speakers at the Tribal Conference



Anne Dubey, Director, RC&D and Rural Lands, Washington, DC shared the national perspective of Tribal - NRCS accomplishments

Farmfest 2006 by Julie MacSwain

This year's Farmfest marked the 25th year of this annual event for Minnesota farmers. A lot has changed in agriculture over the last 25 years from technological advances in equipment to research that commodities that produce better than they did two and a half decades ago.

Gilfillan farm, Redwood County, Minnesota is the site where Farmfest occurs. Redwood County is an area rich in history and certainly an excellent place to hold Farmfest.

Over 600 exhibitors were showcased at Farmfest. MN NRCS had a booth with Redwood Soil and Water Conservation District, MN DNR and Pheasants Forever. A theme of private lands conservation was inter-twined between these displays. The booth guests were able to meet one-on-one with actual field office employees who were familiar with various programs throughout the state of Minnesota. This proved to be an effective way of showcasing our agencies and what we do at Farmfest.

For more information about Farmfest please contact Julie MacSwain, State Public Affairs Specialist at (651)-602-7859 or via e-mail at: Julie.macswain@mn.usda.gov



Collin Peterson, 7th District Congressman stopped by the State FAC meeting. Ann English, ASTC-Operations was chairing the August 1st State FAC meeting at Farmfest.



L-R Julie MacSwain,, Public Affairs Specialist, Brenda Tonn, CSP Soil Conservationist and Ann English, ASTC-Operations work at the Farmfest booth in Redwood County.

Mark your calendars now for Farmfest 2007!

The 26th annual Farmfest will take place August 7,8 & 9, 2007 in Redwood County, Minnesota.

Mid-America Rural Tour – Conservation and Development innovations

The Farm Foundation hosted a tour of conservation and economic development initiatives in South Dakota, Iowa and Minnesota Aug. 7-10, 2006. The tour highlighted community-based development activities, private initiatives, and projects funded by USDA Rural Development and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The tour provided participants with an opportunity to interact with business and community leaders and to have frank discussions about the hard work, thrills and perils of conservation and economic development in rural America.

The tour, hosted by Farm Foundation in collaboration with USDA's Rural Development and NRCS, began in Sioux Falls, S.D., and concluded in Rochester, MN. Tour stops included EQIP and CSP sites, a wind farm, a rural water system, ethanol plants and biodiesel plants, as well as conversations with rural utility company executives and entrepreneurs working in nutritional supplements and animal health.

Tour participants included: State and regional business and community leaders, Representatives of NGOs working on agricultural, food system or rural community issues, Current and former members of Congress, and Officials of USDA officials, including Under Secretary Tom Dorr, and Under Secretary Mark Rey.

Steve Woltjer, District Conservationist, Worthington, Field Office and Kasey Taylor, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, St. Peter, MN represented MN NRCS during this tour.

On Tuesday evening, August 8, 2006 Kasey Taylor, gave remarks at the evening banquet which was held in Worthington, MN on behalf of William Hunt, State Conservationist.

On Wednesday, August 9, 2006 Steve Woltjer shared the story of conservation accomplishments on the bus from Worthington, MN enroute to Brewster, MN.

Steve showcased the Prairie Wetland Learning Area which is a 40 acres Waterfowl Production Area located in the City of Worthington. This was created through the efforts of US F&WS, NRCS, Nobles SWCD, Okabena-Ocheda Watershed District, the Worthington School District, numerous wildlife groups and concerned citizens.

Later on August 9th, Kasey Taylor showcased the Kluender CSP farm in Faribault County, MN with the tour participants. The Kluender's entered into an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contract in 2002. The contract included practices such as cover crop and organic crop production.

In 2004, Archie and Denise applied for the Conservation Security Program and were approved. Over the years, the Kluender's have established grass waterways, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, and other conservation practices to reduce erosion and improve their water quality.

A special thank you to both Steve Woltjer and Kasey Taylor for their involvement in this event!



Kasey Taylor, ASTC-Operations, St. Peter, Minnesota shared the Kluender story with the tour participants.

Steinberg Nature Park Project Receives \$140,000 MN DNR Grant by Amy Stratton

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has announced a \$140,000 Outdoor Recreation Grant award to the City of Blue Earth for the Steinberg Nature Park project. Final notification of the grant award and approval to proceed with the project development is anticipated in the near future. Over 33 acres of land was donated to the City by Ms. Vera Steinberg for a nature park and the grant funds will be used to establish native prairie, signage and trail development.

The City of Blue Earth requested assistance from Three Rivers RC&D to assist with writing the application and project development. The Outdoor Recreation Grant Program was applied for in March of 2006 with notice of the award coming on August 11, 2006. The City and Three Rivers RC&D will continue to work together on the final grant administration and seeking funding for future phases of the park. Development of the Steinberg Nature Park is anticipated to begin this Fall.

MASWCD Leadership Development Program

In 1995 MASWCD began development of a leadership program with the goal of enhancing the leadership and capabilities of SWCDs in Minnesota. Understanding that being a leader takes hard work and guidance, MASWCD worked with the University of Minnesota Extension Service to develop an eighteen-month program that would bring to SWCD participants the necessary skills to be leaders in the conservation movement in Minnesota. The first leadership program took place April, 1996.

Recently MASWCD selected three NRCS employees to participate in the MASWCD Leadership program. Leah Duzy, Agricultural Economist, St. Paul; Casey Schroeder, Soil Scientist, International Falls and Jessica Weis, Soil Scientist, Sandstone, MN were chosen to participate in this next Leadership class. Congratulations, Leah, Casey and Jessica!

A special Thank you to the NRCS employees and Earth Team volunteers who worked at the Minnesota State Fair, August 24 - September 4, 2006.

Your extra effort and enthusiasm was greatly appreciated.

If you should have any suggestions for next year's fair booth or theme, please contact Julie MacSwain, State Public Affairs Specialist. Julie can be reached at (651)-602-7859 or via e-mail at: julie.macswhain@mn.usda.gov

Strip-Till Day 2006

Over 600 farmers and agricultural professionals participated in field demonstrations and education sessions at the July Strip-Tillage Expos held at the UM Research and Outreach Centers at Lamberton and Waseca. The nine strip-tillage implements demonstrated in small grain stubble may have been the largest collection ever run side-by-side. The University of Minnesota Extension Service sponsored these two days to offer growers across southern Minnesota a good look at what tools and methodology is available.

Attendance was strong at the education sessions on comparative yield response, soil fertility management, and guidance systems for strip-tillage. Of special interest was the noon panel of experienced strip-tillage farmers, who answered in-depth management questions.

With the recent rise in fuel and fertilizer prices, farmers are attracted by the potential fuel savings and lower banded phosphorus and potassium fertilizer rates that strip-tillage offers. The Expos were capstone events following two years of on-farm conservation tillage trials and demonstrations. The project was facilitated by an EPA-funded and MPCA-managed 319 grant through the UM Water Resources Center, and was carried out by UM Extension and Experiment Station staff in collaboration with staff of the Monsanto Company.

Lower Rice Lake Bridge and Water Control Structure: A Conservation Partnership between White Earth Natural Resources Dept (WENRD), White Earth Dept of Transportation (WEDoT), NRCS and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) by Dustin Jasken

The goal of this project is to replace the existing bridge and water control structure where the Wild Rice River outlets from Lower Rice Lake (LRL), this is the only place where WENRD can manage water levels from the 2,000 acre LRL basin. The existing bridge and water-control structure (dated 1936) at LRL are in the process of being replaced with safer, more ecologically sensitive, and management friendly facilities. Overall, this project will add to the cultural, economic, recreational and political values LRL brings to the White Earth Reservation and surrounding communities.

LRL is a large and complex wetland system within the confines of the White Earth Indian Reservation on tribal land. Geographically, the project is located in northwestern MN in Section 16, North La Prairie Township, Clearwater Co., MN. LRL is also a notable source and flow through component of the Wild Rice River Watershed in Northwest, MN.

Old bridge and water control structure



LRL is within the confines of the 6,080 acre LRL Wildlife Management Area, which is managed for wildlife, waterfowl, and most importantly, wild rice production. This area is designated solely for the use and benefits of White Earth Tribal band members. Continued access to and management of the LRL Wildlife Management Area is dependent on proper functioning of the bridge and water control structure.

Tribal goals for the new water control structure are to enhance wild rice management and production by allowing for ease in water level management. Ecologically, water level management is imperative to wild rice germination and subsequent stages of growth. Water level management is also a valuable tool for the Tribal members who hand harvest wild rice; 'Ricers' must be able to navigate the water via push pole and canoe in order to access wild rice beds.

Demolition of the old bridge and water control structure



Partners - A bridge portion of the LRL project is funded by and through the BIA to White Earth Reservation by means of a 638 contract. WEDoT is responsible for administering the project, but the BIA has some oversight. WENRD will be in charge of managing the new water control structure.

The NRCS is providing financial assistance for the water control structure through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – Structure for Water Control (587).



Construction of the new bridge and water control structure



Robt' R. Schroeder Construction, Inc. began project construction in late June under the guidance of Northern Engineering & Consulting of Bemidji, MN. Conditions have been dry at the project site and progress has gone smoothly. The new bridge is currently in its final stages of being completed. The water control structure will be the last portion finished, due to a back order on materials. Anticipated project completion is in early November. Many groups and individuals have come together on this project. It has been wonderful to see the interest and cooperation from all those involved.

Appropriate Use of the NRCS Symbols

A guide on the proper placement of the NRCS logo, the official colors for printers, and other information can be found on my.nrcs. Click on Public Affairs. Click on More Public Affairs Information. The NRCS Logo and Usage Folder is on the left side of the page.

Meaning

The NRCS Symbol has three elements:

- 1) The blue raindrop atop the green contour-the raindrop symbolizes both the purity and power of natural forces that shape the land. The contour symbolizes both landform and vegetation - tools used in conservation to capture the benefits of nature and protect the land.
- 2) The initials for the agency's name--the modern type style of the initials reflects our use of the latest scientific knowledge in our conservation practices.
- 3) The agency name spelled out and in some cases accompanied by the name of the Department--the full name supplements the graphic elements and the initials.

Re-sizing

Please note that you do not distort the proportions of the logo when placing it into files such as Microsoft Word. If you need to make it larger or smaller, grab one of the diagonal handles and re size the symbol.

RC&D Coordinators and MARC&D Staff Training Recently Held in Albertville

The Minnesota NRCS Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Coordinators and staff of the Minnesota Association of RC&D Councils (MARC&D) recently came together for a training session held July 18-19 in Albertville, Minnesota. During the two-day session, the group received training on the proposed changes to the RC&D program manual in addition to training on how RC&D program objectives tie in to the NRCS strategic plan.

Another main focus of the training was marketing. The group received marketing training covering how to organize various events such as educational seminars, public input sessions, conservation tours, and press conferences just to list a few. MARC&D is currently working on a tactical marketing plan and the training provided an opportunity to build upon that planning process.

Presenters included John Nicholson, ASTC(FO) Rochester; Amy Stratton, Three Rivers RC&D Coordinator; Julie MacSwain, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist; John Schmidt, Earth Team Volunteer for WesMin RC&D; and special guest Tim Wilson, ASTC(FO) Brooklyn Center.



RC&D employees enjoyed their summer training event ! RC&D does know how to make things happen, just ask any RC&D employee!

“Cow Colleges” Spotlight Grazing Management, Stockmanship and Animal I.D. Technology by John Zinn

In a cooperative effort between NRCS, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Minnesota Association of RC&D Councils, Minnesota Board of Animal Health, University of Minnesota Extension and Agricultural Industry representatives, a series of “Cow Colleges” were held from June 21-29, 2006 at six different locations throughout the state of Minnesota. On-site planning and logistics was provided by local RC&D Councils and County Extension staff. The program focused on Animal ID, grazing management, fencing and watering systems and stockmanship.

Producers were given an update on National Animal Identification issues by a District Veterinarian from the Minnesota Board of Animal Health. University of Minnesota professor Dr. Alfredo DiConstanzo and University of Minnesota Beef Specialist Lori Schott addressed the topic of “Process and Source Verification of Cattle”. NRCS District Conservationists Jim Fritz, Bob Korth, and Jerry Purdin spoke on cost share programs available to assist in the implementation of managed grazing systems.

NRCS grazing specialists Mark Hayek, Howard Moechnig, Lance Smith, and John Zinn spoke on the topics of “Measuring Pasture Productivity” and “Forage Growth, Development and Animal Interaction”.

Jo Fife of the Rocky Mountain Range Riders gave an overview of Stockmanship, knowing and understanding the behavioral responses of livestock and how to use that knowledge to easily handle livestock.



Grazing workshops provide an excellent opportunity for hands-on learning in the field!

Minnesota Tribal Outreach

NRCS in Minnesota continues to make great strides in tribal outreach. These efforts have opened up several doors for MN tribal members. This in turn has led to success in planning and application of conservation on the landscape.

Please meet the Tribal Liaisons of Minnesota NRCS Liasons!



LeAnne M. Langeberg
Soil Conservation Technician/Tribal Liaison
Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians
PO Box 279
Highway One
Red Lake, MN 56671
Leanne.langeberg@mn.usda.gov
(218)-679-3959

Dustin L. Jasken
Soil
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Reservation
41001 South Ice
Cracking Road
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Dustin.jasken@mn.usda.gov
(218)-573-3842



David S. Wise
Soil Conservationist/Fond du Lac Tribal College
20101 14th Street
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Call for Papers

The Minnesota Terrestrial Invasive Species Conference will be held March 7-8, 2007 at the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud *in cooperation with the*

- MN Soil and Water Conservation Society
- MN Natural Resources Conservation Service
- MN Department of Natural Resources
- MN Department of Agriculture
- U of M Invasion Biology Research Consortium
- MN County of Agricultural Inspectors
- US Forest Service

Presentation proposals are being solicited for the topics listed below; however, any topic related to terrestrial invasive plants will be considered.

- Development of control and Management Plans/Strategies
- Inventory and Mapping
- Control Techniques (Mechanical, Chemical or Biological)
- Monitoring and Evaluation of Control Effects
- Rehabilitation/Restoration
- Case studies

Questions and details about this call for papers should be directed to Ginger Kopp at 651-602-7909/ginger.kopp@mn.usda.gov



The 9th Annual Midwest Value Added Agriculture Conference

Midwest Value Added Conference: The Hiawatha Valley RC&D will be co-hosting the ninth annual Midwest Value Added Conference in 2007. The conference, 'Ringing in the Profits', will be co-hosted with River Country RC&D in Red Wing, Minnesota in January 2007. The Council is currently looking for partners and sponsors for the workshop. The Council will be taking on a leadership role to host the Conference.

Some of the topics that will be covered include:

- Working with a Mainstream Food Buyer
- Legal Issues & Taxing
- Marketing 101
- Renewable Energy
- Adding Value to Woodlands
- Building Relationships with Customers
- Internet & Web Page Design and Marketing
- Community Supported Agriculture

Almost invariably, conservation farming—which, after all, is common sense farming with scientific methods—begins to show results the very first years it is applied.

Hugh Hammond Bennett

2006 Minnesota State Fair

August 24th - September 4th marked the dates of the 2006 Minnesota great get-together. A special thank you to the many NRCS employees and Earth Team Volunteers that spent time working the NRCS booth.

The tradition of having a booth started when Tim Koehler, Assistant State Conservationist - Programs was serving as the Minnesota SWCS Chapter President. In the early 1990's. Tim brought together the SWCS Chapter, SCS and MASWCD. The group stayed together a few years and eventually SCS/NRCS moved forward to have their own stand-alone Fair booth.

For many NRCS employees in Minnesota, working at the Minnesota State Fair has become a yearly tradition. For example, Tim Koehler and Tom Steiger, District Conservationist work together each year.

We do have a great deal of positive programs and activities that we can tell others. Working at the MN State Fair is a good way for NRCS to expand it's outreach with people and let others know about the good we are doing.

NRCS, Helping People Help The Land.



Sonia Jacobsen, Hydraulic Engineer worked the first shift of the State Fair with Peter Weikle, Area Soil Scientist.



State Fair booth workers enjoy their 2006 Labor Day at the MN State Fair! L-R Mary Ann Schreifels, Germil Lewis, Gloria Larson and Jim Lyons, Earth Team Volunteer



Peter Weikle, Area Soil Scientist from Area 4 explains the farm display to a fair guest!

Take care of the land and the land will take care of you

Hugh Hammond Bennett

CSP and EQIP Success in Fillmore County **By Sue Glende**

Fillmore County had good participation during the recent CSP Modification Period. Over 40 contract holders expressed interest in modifying their current contracts for 2007, and 36 of these met the required criteria and were able to modify their contracts. The majority of these modifications were for Tier I or Tier II contracts transitioning to Tier III, and several of them were Tier III contract holders adding new enhancements to their contracts. Much of this success is due to the continued implementation of rotational grazing systems through EQIP. Several CSP participants completed implementing their grazing systems which allowed them to have their pastures under contract and transition up in Tiers. Also through the EQIP program was the successful implementation of several rock chutes. These rock chutes will provide an adequate outlet for waterways during large rain events



Rock chute on the farm of Steven Eickhoff

New Orleans 1 year later **By Patrick McLoughlin**

I was talking to my Mom the other day. She's recovering from double knee replacement surgery, an operation that was scheduled to happen exactly one year ago when Katrina intervened. She mentioned that everyone was commenting on the shirt she was wearing. It said "I know I can do it, I'm a woman". It's one of her favorite shirts and it was donated from someone in Minnesota last year during the unbelievable outpouring of support my family received from folks across the state.

I mention these things because I realize that in the aftermath of something that still seems so unreal, that ruined or drastically changed so many lives, it's the little things that really matter. It's not about the scale of how dreadful everything looked when I went back home last January and even still in July. It's more about the clothes my family still wears, the furniture they still use, and the money that helped them buy food to eat and whatever else they needed. All things that came from so many people in Minnesota that barely knew me let alone my family. It's about people from all over the country, including many from our agency, who have been down there to help out in anyway they can.



So one year later the McLoughlins have a lot to be thankful for. Everyone has a permanent place to live and is getting back on their feet. My mom has retired from her job of 30 years, not by choice, but thanks to the donations of a couple of sewing machines, she continues to earn a little extra money being the dynamic, chatty, and talented seamstress she's always been.

White Earth Tribal Conservation District

On October 11, 2005 White Earth Reservation made strides toward becoming the first Tribal Conservation District in the State of Minnesota by signing a Tribal Resolution to establish White Earth Tribal District.

So what is a Tribal District and why establish a tribal district? A tribal district provides an entity for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the tribe to work together. USDA needs the tribal district's local leadership to help guide them in bringing the needed USDA programs to the reservation and provide a means for the tribal government and tribal members to sculpture and participate in USDA programs. A tribal district establishes an enduring basis for cooperation and assistance between White Earth Reservation and the USDA to help achieve common community development, natural resources management and conservation goals and objectives.

As a result of White Earth's efforts, a Mutual Agreement (MA) signing ceremony is being scheduled between White Earth Reservation Tribal Council, White Earth Tribal District, and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to recognize the common objective of assisting people in their efforts to utilize and manage tribal resources in accordance with their capabilities and needs for protection and improvement. Within this agreement each party is independent, has its respective responsibilities, and yet recognizes the need to coordinate as partners for the successful delivery of USDA programs on White Earth Reservation.

Tribal Districts can work not only with the NRCS, but with all USDA agencies and offices by entering into cooperative working agreements with individual USDA agencies and offices. Nonetheless, White Earth Tribal District will formulate, collect and disseminate natural resources and conserva-

tion issues between tribal members, White Earth Reservation Tribal Council and the USDA, similar to what is done by the county administered SWCDs.

A major supporter of White Earth Reservations efforts to establish White Earth Tribal District has been the Indian Nations Conservation Alliance (INCA). INCA is an organization that strives to educate Tribes about the value and importance of Tribal Districts, both to Tribes and the USDA. INCA has put together capacity building materials for Tribal Districts, including a Tribal District Supervisors handbook and a "Seven Generations" Plan.

The administration, staffing, funding and priority items for Tribal Districts are the responsibility of the respective tribe, and for a first-timer like White Earth Tribal District there will likely be a number of trials and tribulations. The driving force behind White Earth Tribal District is ultimately doing what is best for the people and the land. For more information contact Dusty Jasken, NRCS – White Earth Tribal Liaison, at 218-573-3842 or by email dustin.jasken@mn.usda.gov.

**AREA 1
GLEN KAJEWSKI, ASTC(FO),
THIEF RIVER FALLS, MN**

Minnesota Tribal Conservation Advisory Council Tribal Outreach and Training Conference, August 8-9, 2006, Mille Lacs Gand Casino, Onamia, MN



- In recognition of White Earth Tribal District: Bottom row (left to right) LeAnn Buck, Executive Director, MN Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts; Mike Swan, Natural Resources Director, WENRD; Dawn Kier, Ag/Wetlands Manager, WENRD; Middle row (left to right) Curt Bevins, Ag/Wetlands Technician, WENRD; Anne Dubey, Director, Resource Conservation & Development & Rural Lands Division – NRCS; Chris Herman, Land Office Reality Specialist, WENRD; Bill Hunt, State Conservationist, NRCS MN; Leslie Faine, White Earth Anishinabe Center; Leah Prussia, White Earth Land Recovery Project; Back Row (left to right) Will Bement, Water Quality Specialist, WENRD; Ed Snetsinger, Pesticides Coordinator, WENRD; Dusty Jasken, White Earth Reservation Tribal Liaison, NRCS MN; Everett “Pat” Goodwin III, Ag/Wetlands Technician, WENRD.

Personnel:

Congratulations to Luther Newton on his selection as the District Conservationist in the Red Lake Falls FO. Luther begins his new duties on October 2, 2006.

Cari Rebischke, District Conservationist, transferred from the Red Lake Falls FO to the Bagley FO.

Danny Thorstad, SCT Warren FO, resigned from NRCS to accept the District Manager position with the Marshall County SWCD.

Debbie Rynda began her new duty as the Area 1 Program Specialist in August. Welcome Debbie to the Area Staff.

Matt Baltes, GIS Specialist, was converted from the FCIP to a career conditional appointment.

Students, Luke Klawitter and Dan Pazdernik have returned to school at the University of Minnesota Crookston.

Congratulations to Michael Steinhauer, Soil Conservation Technician – Roseau FO, on a recent Promotion.

**First Annual Wadena Wildlife and
Conservation Expo a Success**
By Dean Schmidt, RC&D Coordinator

Over 1,800 people attended a weekend event in Wadena on August 25, 26, and 27. The event was hosted by Wadena Soil and Water Conservation District who put together a committee of dedicated community volunteers and family members interested in hunting and outdoor sports and wildlife conservation. A good variety of vendors also supported the event, from sporting good stores to car dealerships to dog food companies. Hunting clubs, archery clubs, and dog trainers also supported the event and helped plan the clay pigeon shooting, archery competition, and dog field trials.

Friday, August 25 vendors set up at the Wadena Fairgrounds and presentations were conducted throughout the day. Presentations included Water Quality, NRCS programs for Wildlife Habitat, Food Plot Mixes, Trapping Etiquette, Pheasant Habitat, and Predator Hunting.

Saturday was the biggest attendance, with over 1,000 people flocking into the Fairgrounds throughout the day. A big hit was the Clay Pigeon shooting which had 85 participants as well as a good audience. There was also archery competition which included youth. Most events included an opportunity for youth to participate and learn about hunting or outdoor recreation.

Another popular event Saturday was the antler contest. Hunters brought in their racks to have them scored and also to view the "New York Mills Black Powder Buck" that set a new record in Minnesota last year and may be ninth in the world! Presentations occurred throughout the day as well on Duck habitat and Food, Forest Stewardship, Bear Clinic, Grasslands Management, Timberland Management, and Wildlife Photography.

On Sunday, dog training and dog shows were the popular event. Participants were shown with trained dogs how to teach basic dog obedience, dogs were run through an agility course which was very entertaining, and hunting dogs participated in retrieving trials and



exhibitions. Participants were allowed to run their dogs through the agility course and fetch "birds" and retrieve them. Kids also built birdhouses that day. At 1:30, the Expo was delighted to have DNR Commissioner Gene Merriam present and lead a discussion and question and answer session on DNR wildlife issues.

Many positive comments were received on the event, plans are to continue this event as a yearly event held by Wadena SWCD. A special thank you to the planners, participants and especially the volunteers, sporting clubs, and Molly Costin and family. WesMin RC&D assisted with planning and working during the Expo.

**Larry Nelson Onanegozie RC&D Coordinator
receives state-wide
“OUTSTANDING STAFF PERSON AWARD” -
August 29, 2006**

At the Minnesota Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, Inc. Statewide Summer Meeting held in Alexandria August 29th and 30th Larry Nelson, Coordinator for the Onanegozie RC&D, was awarded the “Outstanding Staff Person Award”. Larry Nelson, Coordinator for the Onanegozie RC&D, was selected because of his ability to see the future and positively push to improve the future for all of us. Larry’s assistance, hard work and diligence along with the ability to work with others has allowed the Onanegozie RC&D Council to achieve their mission: to enhance the quality of life by facilitating the development of local economic and natural resources.

Larry presently assists the MARC&D secretary and earlier helped the past MARC&D President move the association into the new millennium. When Larry was asked to assist in the development of new RC&D areas, he stepped up to the challenge and provides guidance on how to form a council and become accredited with the National Association RC&D.

During the 16 years as coordinator, Larry has created many partnerships in east central Minnesota and neighboring Wisconsin. He has also gone beyond the local and state level by being

on several committees at the National level.

Because of Larry Nelson’s enthusiasm, sense of purpose, and dedication to the concept of bringing leadership to rural Minnesota, the MN Association of RC&Ds was pleased to present the “Outstanding Staff Person Award” to him.

Personnel:

Fred Kollmann, Area Program Specialist, joined the Area Office staff on August 7, 2006. Glad to have you, Fred!

Shannon Rasinski, Soil Conservationist, joined the Hinckley Field Office staff on July 10, 2006. Welcome aboard, Shannon!

Patty Burns, Soil Scientist, joined the International Falls Soil Survey Office on June 25, 2006. Welcome aboard, Patty!

Ileana Henry, Becky Robinson, and Peter Mead are new WAE’s. Ileana and Becky are working at the Center of Excellence in Cloquet, MN. Peter Mead is on detail at the State Office. Welcome aboard!

Kimberly Peterson is a new WAE working at the Milaca Field Office. Welcome aboard, Kim!

Awards

Non-monetary award presented to Clinton Tuve, Project Leader, Soil Survey Office, Virginia, MN. Congratulations, Clint!

On a personal note...

Congratulations to Thomas Gervais and his wife on the birth of their daughter, Aurora (born August 6)!



Jim Hall,
President of
MARC&D
presents
Larry Nel-
son with
“Outstanding
Staff Person
Award.”

Stearns County Initiates Producer Self Certification

By Jaime Schaunaman and Meghan Lene

The Waite Park Field Office has taken an innovative approach certifying Residue Management practices funded through EQIP. Due to the large workload with over 90 contract holders, averaging five fields each needing residue checks, District Conservationist Steve Sellnow had a novel idea - producer self certification! Contract holders are given detailed instructions on how to measure residue using the line transect method, and a residue management documentation worksheet to complete. Producers determine the average residue levels by completing five residue counts per field under contract. Once the producer has completed the residue worksheet, field office staff review the residue levels, certify the eligible fields in ProTracts, and begin the payment process. Next, field office staff completes a critical part of conservation planning, reporting progress in Toolkit. Finally, spot checks are completed on 5% of the contracts to ensure residue management practices are being implemented according to NRCS standards.

Despite some initial skepticism from staff and producers this procedure has proven to be a great conservation education experience for the past two years. Sellnow states "With the added workload of contract administration, field offices have to work smarter. The residue self certification process has been very successful in Waite Park; involving producers in line transect and certification has led to better understanding of tillage practices and their benefits by our producers."



Stearns County producer, Joe Krippner, using the line transect method to determine the percent residue cover on EQIP Residue Management fields.

Photo by: Meghan Lene.

Personnel:

Derrick Johnson, District Conservationist transferred from Ellsworth, Wisconsin to Waconia, MN effective August 6, 2006.

Riley Maanum started work with the Central Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation District on July 3, 2006. Riley is the new Open Lot Agreement (OLA) engineering technician that will provide and coordinate technical assistance to livestock producers that have signed the OLA. Riley's area includes the counties of Todd, Morrison, Benton, Sherburne, Wright, McLeod, Meeker and Stearns. Over 1000 producers have signed the OLA in the eight-county area. All of these producers will need to have their facilities in compliance by 2010. Riley, a former employee with the NRCS, states "I'm looking forward to working with producers in solving their problems."

Awards:

Non-monetary awards of khaki jean denim shirts were awarded to the following NRCS employees for their guidance and leadership provided in cleaning up old Farm Bill Program contracts between 1997 and 2004 in ProTracts: John Crellin, Martin Goettl, Pat Gehling, April Hill, George Montgomery, Ed Musielewicz, Jim Onstad, Craig Peterson, Steve Sellnow, Kevin Senander, Stan Wendland, and Michelle Wohlers.

Commentary - Who will carry the torch?

The other day, I was reminded again about the number of vacancies being posted throughout the U.S. for NRCS jobs. We've all heard the statistics that nearly one half of the workforce will either retire or be eligible to retire within the next five years. That is a huge turnover. I see weekly announcements from the national office on someone filling a position of a retired colleague. We all know what happens with any team when all the veterans leave and the rookies are left to carry the torch. The same holds true with this agency, who will carry the torch when we leave? My fear is that those of us, who are soon to retire, won't have the time to pass on our experience, knowledge and common sense to those just joining the team. A good team consists of rookies, those with some experience and the veterans. Is the agency prepared to transfer the torch, are there willing employees to take the time to transfer that experience and are those that are willing to accept it? I'm concerned; will you be able to carry the torch?

Approximately 80 women attended the 5th Annual Southwest Women's Day Event on Wednesday, September 6, 2006. Fruits of Our Vine – Minnesota's Alternative Products was this year's theme. The morning session was held at the St. Michael's Church in Morgan, MN with presenters talking about their programs/services from the Soil & Water Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, and Agricultural Utilization Research Institute. After lunch, the ladies were transported to the Fieldstone Vineyard, rural Morgan, to learn about alternative produce such as grapes/wine making, strawberries/raspberries, and organic farming of flax, raising pasture-raised broiler chickens, selling omega 3 eggs and raising grass-fed beef. Afterwards, the ladies either tasted wine and/or shopped at the fieldstone vineyard gift store. It was an enjoyable day as well as an informative one.

Allisa Wendland, Soil Conservation Technician, Slayton Field Office participated in the 5th Annual SW Minnesota Women's Day Event.



Ben Fast, County Executive Director for Redwood county FSA served as one of the speakers at the Women's Day event.

Women's Day participants learned about picking grapes from the vine.



Personnel Actions:

Hired WAE- Therese DeBaere, Marshall AO
Hired WAE- Brenda Kircher, Marshall AO
Return to College – LWOP – Casey Thomazin
Promotion – Cal Dunblazier, CET, Marshall AO
Promotion – Elizabeth Collins, GIS Specialist, Marshall, AO
Promotion – Michelle Legatt, Program Specialist, Marshall AO
Promotion – Dana Raines, DC, Redwood Falls

Length of Service Awards:

25 year – Joe Kristoff
20 year - Elizabeth Collins

Ethanol and Biodiesel Expo: Takin' it to the Streets **By Amy Stratton**

On Thursday, September 7th the Ethanol and Biodiesel Expo: Takin it to the Streets was held at Snell Motors, Mankato from 10 am to 6 p.m. Keynote presenter, Dr. Bruce Jones, MSUM Automotive Engineering Technology spoke about alternative fuel research and showed some of their vehicles. A state legislator panel was moderated by Kevin Schulz, The Land Magazine Editor, with Representatives Ruth Johnson, John Dorn, Tony Cornish, Laura Brod and Senators Julie Rosen and Dick Day followed the keynote. This educational event featured presentations from many persons working on renewable transportation fuels.

The event started with a welcome from Lt Governor Carol Molnau. Other honored guests include Gene Hugoson, MN Department of Agriculture Commissioner; Katy Wortel, Blue Earth County Commissioner; Mark Lindquist, MN Project Policy Analyst; Kristen Weeks Ducanson, Soybean Research and Promotion Council; Tim Gerlach, American Lung Association; Reece Nanfito, Ethanol Promotion and Information Council; and Gary Pectorious, Ethanol Promotion and Information Council. Buses were available to take people out to North Star Ethanol Plant for tours throughout the afternoon. In addition, there were many exhibitors and vendors.

The event was open to the public and widely advertised. Lynn Kettleson, Linder Farm Network and Peter Steiner of KTOE radio were on site broadcasting live from the event. The over 300 people who attended also had the opportunity to purchase food from local vendors and stop by booths for give-a-ways and register for a chance to win door prizes. Attendees were asked to fill out a short survey and receive a fuel discount coupon regarding their knowledge of ethanol and

biodiesel. This surveys will provide Three Rivers RC&D and project partners information about the effectiveness of this educational event. Project partners include AgStar Financial Services, ACA; American Lung Association of Minnesota; Clean Energy Resource Teams; Greater Mankato Economic Development Corp.; Greater Mankato Area Chamber of Commerce; Information Radio AM 1420 KTOE, Oldies FM 100.5, 96.7 & 94.7 KDOG The Dog FM, and KRRW County 101.5; Minnesota Corn Growers Association; Minnesota Soybean Research and Education Council; Northstar Ethanol LLC; Region Nine Development Commission; R9 Renewable Energy Task Force (Blue Earth County, Nicollet County, Watonwan County, Martin County, Minnesota State University-Mankato, Gustavus Adolphus College, MN Project, Rural Advantage, Three Rivers Resource Conservation and Development); Snell Motors; Blue Earth County Corn Growers; Nicollet County Corn Growers; Sibley County Corn Growers; Blue Earth County Soybean Growers; Archer Daniels Midland; Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation; Ethanol Promotion & Information Council (EPIC);The Land; and the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Numerous individual volunteers assisted with the event.



AREA 7
JOHN NICHOLSON, ASTC-(FO)
ROCHESTER, MN

Midwest Value Added Conference: The Hiawatha Valley RC&D will be co-hosting the ninth annual Midwest Value Added Conference in 2007. The conference, 'Ringing in the Profits', will be co-hosted with River Country RC&D in Red Wing, Minnesota in January 2007. The Council is currently looking for partners and sponsors for the workshop. The Council will be taking on a leadership role to host the Conference.

Some of the topics that will be covered include:

- Working with a Mainstream Food Buyer
- Legal Issues & Taxing
- Marketing 101
- Renewable Energy
- Adding Value to Woodlands
- Building Relationships with Customers
- Internet & Web Page Design and Marketing
- Community Supported Agriculture

Personnel:

Tim Weisbrod began his duties at the Caledonia Field Office as a Soil Conservation Technician on May 29th. Tim is a graduate of the University of Iowa and has conservation experience working with the USFWS and was a coordinator for the Coldwater Pine Iowa Watershed Protection Project. Tim is currently attending NRCS Boot Camp. Tim has made a great addition to the conservation staff at the field office.



Rich Stemper, Root River SWCD Technician, just returned from a flight where he took aerial photos of Houston County Conservation Farmer of the Year – Howard Deters Farm. The photo shows many years of cooperative conservation effort. How many different conservation practices can you pick out?



The Caledonia Field Office has provided many manure calibration services as a result of CSP, EQIP and our Water Quality Information Campaign. Landowners listen in at a promotional event to encourage the adoption of establishing Bobwhite Quail habitat through the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program. Fillmore and Houston County is approved to establish 500 acres of habitat through CRP.

“PICTURING MINNESOTA 1936-1943”

A book I recently obtained, “Picturing Minnesota 1936-1943” authored by Robert L. Reid (1989), covers photos taken in Minnesota between 1936 and 1943 by the Farm Security Administration (FSA) – the forerunner of the Rural Development Agency. Photographers of the FSA took over 200,000 photos (including over 1,500 in Minnesota) of the daily activities of Americans in the midst of domestic uncertainty and international conflict. One of the chapters dealing with FSA Projects covers the Beltrami Island and the Pine Island Land Utilization Projects which assisted in the relocations of farm settlers unable to survive on land recently depleted of forests. (I discuss the role of SCS in the Land Utilization Projects on pages 37 and 38 of my book “The First 70 Years of Soil and Water Conservation in Minnesota”).

Robert Reid “describes this exceptional photographic collection and puts the images into historical perspective by telling about some of the problems that Minnesota struggled with during the depression and the early years of World War II”. He also describes the various programs of the New Deal farm legislation including the establishment of the Historical Section of the FSA.

The 171 photos of his book “give us a close look at such scenes as lumberjacks in a bar on Saturday night, the rhythm of work and play on a farm in Meeker County, unemployed men in the Gateway district of Minneapolis, and Swedish Americans in Chisago County at the start of World War II”. He also includes scenes in the Beltrami Island Land Utilization Project.

“Although other New Deal agencies (including SCS) documented their work through photography, none left a legacy that compares to that of the FSA Historical Section. Stryker’s (Roy Stryker headed the Historical Section of FSA) use of outstanding professionals who brought a breadth of vision to their work made the ... project truly unique”. Photographers showed that they had both understanding and feelings.

I have the book available for those interested in seeing it. It will become a part of the NRCS State Office Historical Files.

By: Vic Ruhland, Earth Team Volunteer

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Send your articles to:

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Current Developments is appreciated!*

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